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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study that explored how principals "enacted" and "structured" the environments of their schools. Weick's theoretical framework is used to understand the cognitive process by which managers selectively construct and attend to certain features of their environment while ignoring others. Data were obtained from interviews with 10 successful Utah principals, utilizing the Critical Incidents Technique. Findings indicate that, overall, the principals were dependent on the environment for needed resources and legitimacy. The flow of these resources varied by intensity and time; this created uncertainty and contributed to principals' vulnerability to their environments. The principals attended to those environmental stimuli that they perceived as critical to their survival and success. They also varied in their ability to strategically construct and map the environment, and in the degree to which their environmental focus was driven by personal or organizational concerns. The principals felt the need to conform to the demands of both the technical and institutional aspects of the environment. Six tables, one figure, and sample interview questions are included. (LMI)

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On Principals and the Enacting of External Environments

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When used to describe schools in the United States, the adjective "public" would appear to be quite significant. As has been noted elsewhere, a distinguishing structural feature of American schools is their "public vulnerability," i.e. schools are vulnerable to their environments (Hoy & Miskel, 1991; Willower, 1973). The fact that organizations such as schools interact with their environments is the focus of little debate; however, much debate exists regarding the precise nature of the relationship shared between an organization and its environment. Organizations influence and are influenced by the environments in which they exist (Scott, 1992; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Jacobs, 1974). The environment of the organization functions both to constrain and facilitate organizational processes.

In light of these assumptions, an important component of the managerial imperative would appear to be the development of strategies to minimize the effects of environmental constraints and to maximize the effects and uses of environmental resources. Inherent in the development of such strategies is the cognitive process whereby the manager (or dominant organizational coalition, (Cyert & March, 1963)) "enacts" or "selectively attends" to certain aspects of the environment, while ignoring others. In his description of the social-psychological processes associated with the act of organizing, Weick (1979) refers to this cognitive process of "selecting" and "attending" as "environmental enactment." For Weick, the concept "enactment" is used to emphasize the fact that managers construct, rearrange, single out, and even demolish many features of their environments for the larger purpose of dealing with the equivocality found therein. Through information and the creation of meaning, the manager not only selectively perceives but also directly influences the state of the organizational environment through strategic action, interacting with and, to an extent, constructing the environment of the organization.

Given Weick's theoretical framework, the purpose of this paper is to examine and explore how a group of principals "enact" and "structure" the environment of their school. More specifically, this study seeks answers to the following questions: 1) What is it in the external

environment of the school that principals pay attention to and why? 2) How can the environmental attention-structure of principals be understood? Since efforts to establish cooperation and collaboration are often targeted at entities and organizations which exist in the environment of a given school, conceptualizing and theorizing about the nature of inter-agency cooperation begin with an understanding of how the principal of that school selects, attends to, and/or ignores elements of the organizational environment. If those entities and organizations identified in the normative literature as objects of cooperation fall outside of the purview of a given principal's enacted environment, then efforts of establishing and sustaining cooperative relationships may prove unproductive.

Research Design and Methodology

The questions raised above suggest the utilization of a methodology that will allow the investigator to: 1) probe with principals in an in-depth fashion those environmental entities, events, and activities that capture their attention as managers of the school; 2) seek a rationale for this focus and an explanation of how and why it influences their leadership behavior; 3) compare and contrast the information given by each principal with the remaining principals included in the study, and 4) move towards a tentative and initial theory of environmental selection by principals. Toward these ends, the following qualitative techniques were employed:

Structured Interviews - The initial data for this study were generated from a series of structured interviews over a six month period of time. A small sample of principals was included in the study. This sample consisted of 10 principals across 6 urban and suburban districts in the state of Utah, who were perceived as being "successful" by colleagues and educators in the community. Given that the larger purpose of this study was to move toward an initial explanation (i.e., theory development) of what it is that principals give their attention to in the environment

and why, this was deemed a logical sampling rationale. A descriptive profile of this sample can be found in Table 1.

** Insert Table 1 Here **

The years of experience among principals in the sample ranged from two to nine years, the average tenure approximately five years. In addition, six principals from the elementary level, two from the middle/jr. high level, and two from the high school level were included in the study. The ages of the principals ranged from the late 30s to mid 50s; there were three females and seven males.

Using a set of open-ended questions, a minimum of three interviews were conducted with each participating principal. The focus of each interview in the series varied. Information gleaned from a given principal during an initial interview was used to generate questions for the same principal in subsequent interviews. A sample of specific interview questions used in this study is found in Table 2.

** Insert Table 2 Here **

Critical Incidents Technique - As an extension of the interview process, principals were asked to recall and reflect on their most significant interactions and events with individuals, groups, or organizations outside of their own school building during the past year. Such critical incidents were closely scrutinized and proved to be a valuable source of information for the researcher.

Organizational Environment Literature - As a means of making sense of the data as it emerged, extensive use was made of the organizational theory literature. Though used as a conceptual and theoretical guide of sorts, a conscious attempt was made to let the data speak for itself, i.e. to avoid the premature imposition of a framework on the data.

Principals' Perceptions of the Environment

Before identifying those environmental entities and events which capture the attention of principals, some caveats regarding the nature of the environment, as perceived by the principals in this study, are in order. To begin with, it should be noted that in answers to specific questions and descriptions of critical incidents, the majority of principals had difficulty defining where the school organization ends and where the environment begins. This ambiguity remained in spite of the arbitrary distinction and demarcation offered by a question posed during each initial interview, "...let's say that the environment is everything outside of your school building....". As one principal noted, "I have a hard time separating and distinguishing my school from its environment." Equally representative of this ambiguity is the comment of a second principal, "....I don't see a difference between the external and internal environment of my school."

Principals in this sample likewise seemed to acknowledge variability in environments from school to school. Whether speaking in terms of the physical size of the school's environmental domain, the variability of demands and supports which exist from school to school, or the social composition and mix of the school's constituent base, almost half of the principals acknowledged variability across school and district environments. "The environment of my school is unique," commented one principal. The observations by another principal, suggesting that demands made on the school are greater in those neighborhoods where the SES is higher, are likewise indicative of this recognized variability.

In addition to these perceptions, a initial description of what the environment represents for these principals would appear crucial to the discussion that follows. As distilled from the specific environmental entities/events identified and the comments and descriptions of the multiple critical incidents offered (N=48), three ideas would appear to capture what the environment represents for principals: dependence, uncertainty, and vulnerability. While attempts

appear to have been made by the ten principals in this study to eliminate these on various occasions, the data here suggest that each is an environmental given which not only varies in intensity over time, but can never be eliminated.

It would appear first and foremost that the environment represents dependence for the school and principal. Both are dependent on the environment for legitimacy, i.e., "valuation," the authority to exist as an organization, and the authority to fulfill the role of principal in the school (Selznick, 1957; Scott, 1992). Further, both are dependent on the environment for resources of various kinds, e.g., money, personnel, time, cooperation, etc. The comments of an elementary school in a suburban neighborhood reflect this dependence, "I don't see the role of principal as being a power position...[rather],...I find I'm excessively dependent on a host of environmental forces and demands." Proceeding on the assumption that a strong relationship exists between the amount of parental "support" given and the academic success of the school, the majority of principals in this study recognized the school's dependence on parents, particularly in....."sending their children to school ready to learn."

The dependent relationship perceived to exist between the principal/school and environment leads to a second environmental given identified directly or indirectly by these principals: uncertainty. Given that the flow of needed legitimacy and resources from the environment varies over time, uncertainty regarding the consistency and predictability of this flow would appear to be an important rationale governing the environmental selection process of principals, i.e., why an environmental entity or event captures the attention of the principal. This perception of the environment as a source of uncertainty is reflected in several comments offered by principals,....."It's not good for me [the principal] to be caught off guard or surprised by my environment,".....and,....."Removing uncertainty is not totally achievable, but you can reduce it significantly. I'm a planner....I don't always accomplish everything....., but when the unexpected

arrives, it's OK, because at least I know what I didn't accomplish." This uncertainty is also reflected in the identification and description of those individuals, groups, and critical events noted by the principals in this study, specific examples of which are offered for consideration below.

Given the inconsistent flow of legitimacy and resources from the environment, it would appear that the uncertainty perceived to exist in the environment in many ways emanates from the perceived dependence of both school and principal upon the environment. Such dependence and resultant uncertainty place both school and principal in a vulnerable position to environmental changes, demands and pressures. This state of vulnerability represents a third environmental given for the principals in this study. Consider the following observation by an experienced jr. high principal,..."Your school's not isolated. We have permeable membranes. There's no way I can shut out the world and the environment." Addressing the insecurity that comes from this vulnerability a second principal notes,..."The need for security, the great feeling of insecurity that comes from environmental uncertainty is why first year principals are so vulnerable. They're really insecure."

Taken together, these perceptions of what the environment is -- i.e., something which at times is difficult to distinguish from my school, something that is somewhat variable across schools, and something which represents dependence, uncertainty, and thus increased vulnerability -- appear to capture the essence of the environment for the principals in this study. In this dependent and vulnerable state, it is a logical to understand how the environment becomes a source of demands and supports for both principal and school. As a link-pin between environment and school, the role of principal becomes that of demand-broker and support-garnerer. Both of these ideas are expressed by two different principals...

demands - "You're trying to manage the organization....to manage an atmosphere, a climate, and there're demands being made, some of which are hard to anticipate and offset, because they're [unexpected] and their effects are strong....I must understand and address these demands made by the environment on the school." [elementary principal]

supports - "...if I build relationships with those folks [i.e., individuals and groups in the environment], and I need help or if I need support at school -- in whatever way I need it, then I know that when I call those people, I'm going to get the support that I need....If I've built that relationship, they know that I'm concerned....and then when I ask them, they're more apt to help me." [elementary principal]

Based on the data generated in this study, environmental demands become that which the principal seeks to address and minimize; environmental supports become that which the principal seeks to identify and nurture. As is noted below, those environmental entities/events which represent real or potential demands and supports for the school are the things which capture principals' attention.

Environmental Entities Selected by Principals

A list and frequency count of those environmental entities specifically identified as capturing the attention of principals in this study is offered in Table 3. For the sake of organization, it is noted that: 1) the list of environmental entities identified is divided into three categories: entities in the immediate school community; entities in the school governance community; and entities in the broader community; 2) those entities identified by individual principals are offered in columns A through J respectively; and 3) a total frequency count for each individual entity is offered in the final column labeled "TOTAL." Rather than discuss the rationale offered for each entity, only those entities mentioned by more than half of the ten principals will be discussed.

** Insert Table 3 Here **

parents, individually and corporately - As would be expected, parents were identified as an entity capturing the attention of all principals. Whether identified individually or corporately, i.e., organized as groups and coalitions, e.g., the PTA (or functional equivalent), or as being disruptive or supportive, parents are environmental entities toward which principal attention is directed. Principals offered various descriptions to describe the role of parents: "taxpayer," "patron," "customer," and "client." In such roles, parents are viewed as potential sources of demands, supports, and opposition,..."Parents are my client, they're the taxpayer. I need to be responsive to their concerns and their desires. They can make my life great or they can make my life miserable. They represent a very powerful coalition." Commenting on why parents demand his attention, a younger elementary principal notes, "I want [parents] to support my efforts as principal. Parents make a difference and we need their support to succeed here."

Acknowledging the need to respond to parental demands in order to generate legitimacy for his leadership, a middle school principal remarks, "If I'm not responsive to the realistic and important needs of these patrons, then I think I'm not very credible with them as a parent, and I think they'll tell their neighbors. I have my agenda, they have their agenda, the more points of convergence the easier it's going to be for us to make some improvements or changes in this school." Given the descriptions and discussion offered by these principals, parents are seen as environmental entities upon which the principal depends heavily for his/her legitimacy as leader and upon which the school depends for success.

neighborhood of school - Also mentioned and discussed rather frequently as a focus of principal attention is the school neighborhood. The dynamics, values, stability, transiency, demographic character, and socio-economic conditions of the neighborhood were specifically mentioned as demanding principal attention. Such conditions capture the attention of these principals because of their perceived predictive validity; such conditions provide the basis from

which principals predict the nature of expected environmental demands and support. "...it's where the kids come from," observes a high school principal. "For our school to be out of touch with or somehow ignore what our neighborhood is, is a big mistake." It would appear that such knowledge functions to reduce for the principal the uncertainty of what to expect from the environment.

For many, a relationship between the "quality" of the school neighborhood (specifically mentioned: mid to high SES, cultural homogeneity, minimal number of at-risk students, minimal number of "dysfunctional families,") and the ability of the principal and school to succeed is assumed. According to these principals, in "quality" neighborhoods, parents "support" the school. As noted earlier, both principal and school depend on this support for success. Yet to garner this "support," many principals appear to realize the importance of gauging neighborhood/community values and incorporating these values into the character and structure of the school. As one male high school principal remarked concerning his school's dress code policy, "As principal, it's important to make sure that the policies such as the school dress code are in line with the values of the community. When the school reflects the values of the community, it gains support, trust, and credibility..." Incorporating community values into the school is seen as a means of maintaining and enhancing the legitimacy of both principal and school.

other schools and principals - A third cluster of entities within the school community that appears to capture the attention of principals is other schools and other principals. Although mentioned by only half of the sample, other schools and principals are viewed as sources of critical information, dependence, and possible collaboration. As one highly motivated elementary principal remarked, "I can learn from their trials, tribulations and....successes. I can learn what might work and what won't work without actually doing it. I'm always looking for ways of improving what I do...." In a specific critical incident, an elementary principal initiated an effort

with other elementary school principals in the district for the purpose of lobbying and pressuring the district office for much needed secretarial help. Together with the support of other principals, the demand was brought to bear on the central office.

Dependence on other schools as "feeder schools" was also mentioned by two principals. Speaking of an elementary school that feeds students into his junior high, one principal notes, "Yea, I'm concerned. Will these students coming from Lincoln Elementary be prepared for 7th grade? Are they prepared for my school academically? Will their parents be supportive?"

teachers' union - As an environmental entity present both in and outside of the school, the teachers' union (NEA state affiliate) was mentioned by half of the principals in this study as a potentially disruptive organization, capable of generating negative publicity for both principal and school. From this perspective, the union position is perceived by principals as something to weighed and considered when making personnel decisions. References to the union were offered only in the descriptions of critical incidents. Two incidents focused on teacher dismissal, one on the transfer of a veteran, influential teacher from the school. The remaining two incidents had as their focus the negative publicity generated from an actual and threatened teacher walk-out. When considered together, the teachers union represents for these principals a negative environmental force which functions to increase the public vulnerability of both principal and school.

<u>school governance community</u>

Apart from the immediate school community, though certainly close to it, is the school governance community. As distinguished from the immediate community, the school governance community represents those governing entities that directly or indirectly exercise a degree of authority and/or influence over the school. In response to questions or in describing critical incidents, three specific entities from the school governance community where identified and

discussed by more than half of the principals. These include the local district office, city government, the state department of education (SDE).

school district office - Although recognized as a source of support, the district office appears to capture the attention of principals because of the dependence it creates for, and the demands it makes on both principal and school. "They [the central office] have the power to help or hinder us," comments an experienced elementary teacher. "They are a source of information....., they provide us with technical assistance. More importantly, they control the resources on which I depend."

To the extent that the demands and assistance offered by the district office proved consistent with the vision and direction these principals had for their school, the district office was perceived as a "supporting" entity. In terms of information and technical support, the district proved supportive in dealing with special needs students, larger curricular issues, and situations involving potential litigation. On more than one occasion, principals reported specific incidents of "standing behind" a district policy (i.e., using a district policy as a point of leverage) in dealing with disgruntled parents and selling a curriculum idea to teachers.

However, where demands and assistance proved inconsistent with the vision principals had for their school, the district was seen as "interfering." Three specific concerns were voiced by principals in such cases: 1) complying with these demands (or at least creating the appearance of compliance) so as to maintain the legitimacy of one's own leadership and school with the district office; 2) minimizing the potential disruptive effects of the demand on school operations; and 3) "creatively" adapting the demand in such a way as to meet the needs of the school. Remarks by a high school principal hint at these concerns, "As a designated authority, the district office is my boss. They represent a threat in the sense that I am responsible to them. You want to cooperate

with them, so you respond when they make demands.....[yet],...I attempt to adapt their demands and mandates to the needs of my school."

As a part of the district office, the superintendent and local board were specifically singled out by less than half of the ten principals in this study. Discussions surrounding both entities emphasized the demands and expectations, rather than the supports, emanating from each. As one middle-school principal cynically notes, "The superintendent and school board have things they expect your school to do, and part of it is listening to what it is they expect from you."

city government - City government, i.e., the mayor and city council, was specifically identified as an environmental entity to be attended to by a majority of the principals in this study. Given the political influence of individuals who hold these offices and realizing the effect decisions made at city hall have on their school, principals expressed an eagerness to influence and cooperate with city government. "Decisions they make [city government], particularly annexation and school boundary realignment decisions, have an enormous impact on my school," noted one elementary principal who had experienced the effects of a realignment decision on her school.

"I'm always look for opportunities to get the mayor's attention for my school," observes a seasoned middle-school principal. "When someone comes in from the mayor's office and says, 'Do any of your teachers and students want to participate in such an such an activity?' I'd be foolish not to say yes! .....Not being cooperative with city hall could jeopardize the next tax leeway election. So to me it's an economic issue. It's also a good will issue. It's a matter of, 'Hey we want to be good neighbors with the police, with the fire department with the mayor's office,' because I might have a favor....someday..., in the future I'm going to need that cooperation. It's a you scratch my back, I'll scratch your back kind of thing."

These observations suggest a recognized dependence on the part of principals. Principals recognize the impact of annexation, boundary realignment, bond and tax referenda decisions--decisions made by city government--on their own lives and school. Further, principals recognize their dependence on the services city government provides.

state department of education - As a recognized entity with legislative and executive authority in educational matters, the state department of education was identified by over half of the principals as a distant, "out of touch" entity often imposing unworkable, disruptive mandates on the local school. For this reason, the SDE was identified by principals as an environmental entity capturing their attention. Dealing with curriculum mandates coming from the SDE, one frustrated elementary school principal remarked, "Yea, the state office has power over us, particularly in the area of curriculum. They control the curriculum!...[And yet], they don't know diddly! They sit up there and...they keep dumping all of this stupid curriculum on us!...They're removed and out of touch!"

Similar to the strategy and attitude adopted towards perceived unworkable mandates from the central office, the challenge for those principals identifying the SDE as an environmental entity is that of adapting mandates to local need, even to the point of substantially watering-down, reworking or ignoring the policy. "They [the state office of education] seem very far removed from what I'm doing.....I regard them more as a foe than a friend,.....an imposing force, you know, being far removed from what is actually happening... We kind of do our own thing. We figure out what we think is state of the art, and what we think is the most effective approach, and then we do that and kind of ignore the state office."

broader community -

police - Within the broader community, two entities were identified by principals as capturing the attention more than any others. One of these--the police department--was

discussed by seven principals. Of special note is the fact the police were identified by all middle and high school principals participating in this study.

Though perceived primarily as a supportive entity, police were also perceived on occasion as being intrusive, particularly regarding issues of student protection and privacy. Nevertheless, the need to develop and maintain a cooperative working relationship with police appears evident. "Police help us deal with student disruptions," notes a high school principal. "They're also helpful [to us] in dealing with things like traffic safety, athletic events, student discipline problems, shop-lifting, threats, and fights. We have a need for them and they have a need for us, so we try to maintain a cooperative relationship with them."

As with other environmental entities, principals expressed the need to establish and build "good-will credit" with the police for the purpose of insuring continued cooperation. Realizing their dependence on the police to maintain a safe and orderly school environment and given the unpredictability of knowing when their services might be needed, principals often cooperated with the police when such cooperation proved inconvenient for the school. Such cooperation often involved the gathering and collecting of information on students suspected of being involved in criminal activity away from the school. An experienced middle-school principal of a school in a somewhat diverse neighborhood observes, "There are times when I need the police to help with problems at the school, but there are times when the police need me to help. I try to maintain a cooperative relationship with them. It's a matter of, 'Hey we want to be good neighbors with the police, with the fire department with the mayor's office!' Because I might have a favor of the police someday. In the past, I've had to use [my past cooperation] as...leverage."

local businesses - The second entity set cited by more principals than any other is that of businesses in the community. Above all, local business are seen as potential sources of financial support for the school. They appear to be viewed by principals as the means through which

needed and special programs beyond the school's financial reach are realized. An elementary school principal, who with the help of a local business was able to initiate a program recognizing student achievement, was quite aware of this, "By providing financial support and services, businesses help my school do things that it could otherwise not afford to do."

Not all principals identifying businesses as an environmental entity, however, share this view. As represented in the Junior Achievement Program, one middle school principal viewed the business community as an intrusion. In a critical incident provided by the principal, the local Junior Achievement chapter initiated a program for schools in the district and invited itself into the principal's school. Not fully convinced of the academic contribution of the JA program to students and seeing its potentially disruptive effects on the school's established rhythm, the principal was hesitant to accept the JA offer. In spite of these concerns, and given the fact that the local superintendent was on the JA Board of Directors, the principal was pressured to accept the invitation.

the media - The media was also identified as capturing the attention of principals in this study. Of particular concern was the role of the media in defining the image of the school to the public and the inability of the principal at times to control the media in its creation of this image. "Reporters create images of your school for the public," observed a principal who had a difficult time with the media during a teacher walk-out and subsequent student boycott in his school. "Many times their work and the images they create of your school are out of your control."

Though positive, human-interest stories of schools were recognized as being reported by the media, principals likewise recognized the volatility and potential problems created by the media in their coverage of unexpected, traumatic school events. To counteract this, one principal described how he "worked" the newspaper reporters covering education in his area, "You've got to get to know these people and develop a positive relationship with them. You want them to have

a positive view of you, because down the line something negative is going to happen and they're going to report it. There's going to be a negative issue that's going to affect your school, and you want to be able to come out and point to all of these positive things before the negative one ever hits."

Echoing this vulnerability and recognizing dependence, an elementary principal describes why the media is important to him, "...you need to be equipped to deal with the media....because they have a job to do. [That] job is to let the public know what's going on in the schools. It doesn't matter to them that it's.....detrimental to the school's image. What they're interested in....is selling news.....You have to take the opportunity to communicate [with the media] those things that you and your community think are important."

community opinion leaders - In addition to local government officials, a second set of influential individuals from the community were identified as capturing the attention of principals, "community opinion leaders." Mentioned specifically were a real estate agent, a banker, local religious leaders, the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club, and leading business persons. As entities in the environment, such individuals and groups appear to be of interest for three reasons: 1) their visibility in the local community, 2) their credibility in the local community, and; 3) the number of people and groups with which they interact. For principals, it would appear that community opinion leaders represent a means through which the image of a school can be enhanced (or marred) and through which support or opposition can be identified.

Speaking of why such entities capture his attention, a high school principal notes, "The positions and influence that these individuals exert affect my school and its future, both directly and indirectly.... They're in contact with many, many people in the community. Take Thomas Johnson (leading realtor in community), he helps promote our school by selling the school to the

public. Conscientious home-buyers want to buy in a neighbor that has a good school. Tom helps us attract 'good' families to the neighborhood."

An elementary principal further illustrates this rationale in regards to a local religious leader, "If I have an idea or want some community feedback on something we're doing [here at the school], I'll contact Paul Rodgers (LDS church stake president) and get his reaction.....knowing that what he says probably represents many other voices. He has a lot of credibility in the community, and what he has to say is usually important and worth listening to."

Selected Critical Incidents Identified By Principals

In addition to the multiple interviews conducted with each principal, a variant of the critical-incident technique was used to address the questions raised in this study, i.e., what is it that captures the attention of principals in the environment of their school and why? To help elicit incidents involving interactions with entities from the environment, each principal was initially asked the following question: "Can you give me an example of a specific, memorable incident which involved your interaction with some individual or group in your school environment for a prolonged period of time?" Where it became clear to the interviewer that the subject had misunderstood the question, the question was rephrased. For each incident offered, one, and in some cases, two follow-up interviews were conducted for further elaboration and clarification.

As noted earlier, a total of 48 critical incidents were identified and described by the 10 study participants. This resulted in an average of 4.8 incidents per principal. A profile of all critical incidents by principal is found in Table 4. It is noted that the number of critical incidents offered by principals ranged from two to seven. To help further profile the character of the incidents, two additional dimensions are offered: the origin or specific initiating source of the

incident and; the character of the incident. It should be noted that these dimensions emerged as the data were being analyzed and reanalyzed.

** Insert Table 4 Here **

The "origin of the incident" refers to originating source of the incident as perceived by the principal, i.e., did this incident have its origins in someone/something inside of the school (I=Internal) or outside of the school (E=External)? For example, in the case of principal A, seven critical incidents were offered. In regards to origin, the ratio 4/3 indicates that four of the incidents were perceived to originate inside the school and three outside. Of the total 48 incidents offered, 25 were perceived as originating in the school and 23 outside of the school. Although a substantial number of these incidents were perceived as originating from within the school, each eventually led to the principal interacting with one or more entities outside of the school.

The column labeled "character of incident" refers to the character of the incident as perceived by the principal, i.e., was the incident as described by the principal defined as a problem or opportunity? Two patterns/themes in the data provide the rationale for this dichotomy. The first has as its focus situations that are "givens for the principal" as opposed to situations that are "initiated by the principal." When analyzing the data, it became apparent that most of the incidents identified as being problematical were not of the principal's making. Nevertheless, they were givens that the principal felt compelled to address. The second rationale is rooted in another theme: the expressed desire of principals to be more "pro"-active as opposed to being "re"-active. This theme was evident with nine of the ten principals studied. Statements expressing this sentiment suggest that in regards to the environment, principals often see themselves in more of a reactive role.

Given the ratio of incidents listed for Principal A (5/2), it can be concluded that of the seven incidents offered, five were perceived as problems and two as opportunities. Of the 48 total incidents offered by all principals, 33 were perceived as problems. On the basis of the incidents offered, this suggests that for the principals in this sample, the majority of time spent interacting with environmental entities involves reacting to situations that are givens. As presented in Figure 1, the data would appear to confirm this. Using the origin and character of each incident as dimensions, a two by two summary display of incidents is made possible. Here it becomes evident that 34 of the 48 incidents offered are perceived as problems. A list of the specific origins of various incidents is likewise given by quadrant.

** Insert Figure 1 Here **

Rather than review each of the 48 critical incidents individually, a representative sample of 10 is offered in Tables 5 and 6. The two figures are distinguished on the basis of the principal's perception of the origins of that incident, i.e., did the incident have its origins in someone/something inside of the school (I), or outside of the school (E). Thus, Table 5 contains five incidents perceived by principals as originating within the school; Table 6, five incidents perceived as originating outside of the school. Specific data regarding each incident are presented in matrix form. The data categories listed at the top of each column were identified on the basis of the questions raised in this study and the descriptions offered by respondents. As derived explicitly or implicitly from each principal, these categories include: a brief description of the incident; a list of the participants in the incident; specific concerns expressed about the incident by the principal; a summary description of the principal's rationale for being concerned about the incident; a summary of the principal's action regarding the incident; and, where known, the results of the principal's action. It should be noted that such an analysis was systematically conducted for all incidents offered in the data collection process. For purposes of this discussion only four of

these ten representative incidents will be discussed. Consistent with the classification of incidents presented in Figure 1, a single incident from each quadrant will be highlighted.

** Insert Tables 5 & 6 Here **

As offered by the principal of a large suburban high school, the first incident involves a student walk-out and the principal's attempts to deal with the media coverage that ensued. Given the principal's description, this particular incident was perceived as a problem originating from within the school (I/P). In a move ostensibly designed to show support for an earlier walk-out by teachers, a small group of vocal students organized and threatened school officials to "walk" if teachers' demands were not met. In spite of attempts by the principal to dissuade students to the contrary, 25 students chose to follow through with the threat. Unanticipated by the principal, the move by students generated more publicity in the community than expected. Reporters from the local media (newspaper and television) came and reported the incident in such a way as to generate a substantial amount of negative publicity for the school. According to the principal, the incident was "blown out way out of proportion [by the media], ...we're talking about 25 students out of a school of over 2,000!" Nevertheless, the principal found himself frustrated with his inability to control the image created of his school by the media in its reporting of the event. "You don't want parents and everybody to think that things are out of control here [at the school], they're not!..... coverage like this causes problems for both me and the school!"

Based on this principal's reflections of the incident, it would appear that as an environmental entity, the media captured the principal's attention for two reasons: 1) its ability to manage public perceptions of the school, and 2) his inability to control this process. His dependence on the media coupled with his inability to control the image-creation process ensuing from this incident appears to have functioned to call into question his legitimacy as principal with

several audiences, particularly regarding his ability to maintain "control" at the school. As a result, the public vulnerability level of both school and principal were increased.

The second representative incident is one perceived as being an opportunity initiated within the school (I/O). It was offered by an elementary principal in a rather large school district and involves a series of interactions between the principal and the district office. The interactions culminated with a visit of the assistant superintendent to the school. At issue for the principal was the lack of district "support" perceived to exist for the school. Given the consistently high standardized test scores produced by the school, teachers felt as if the school was "not getting the recognition from the district" that it deserved.

Sensing that this perception was affecting teacher morale, the principal initiated a series of formal and informal contacts with the associate superintendent. As described by the principal, the strategic intent of this initiative was to highlight and communicate over an extended period of time the positive things happening at Jefferson Elementary. Though not explicitly stated, it appeared that the principal also recognized the value of this tactic in increasing the legitimacy of his own role with the district office.

Eventually, the assistant superintendent was invited to come and spend a morning at the school. "I told the faculty that I was bringing him in to show off our school," describes the principal. "Inviting him in provided me the opportunity to build morale in and around my school....[and]....communicate with [the district office] the positive things going on around here."

Given the descriptions offered by this principal, it would appear that the district office, as personified in the assistant superintendent, represents an authoritative environmental entity upon which both school and principal depend for continued legitimacy and support. By developing a personal relationship with the assistant superintendent and inviting him to the school to "show-off" selected programs, the principal was not only able to address teacher morale, but generate

positive publicity and "support" for the school as well. In addition, a relationship was established and an influential advocate at the district level gained.

The third incident has as its focus a principal's response to a petition gathered and signed by a group of neighbor parents regarding after-school use of the school's playground facilities. As such, it was perceived by the principal as a problem originating from the school's environment (P/E). The concern expressed by leaders of the petition was the congregation of gang members/undesirables on the basketball court after school hours and the resultant threat to neighborhood safety. As recounted by the principal, "...they [the petition leaders] were saying gang members were coming out and playing basketball,....making a lot of noise, driving their vehicles on school grounds,.....pushing little kids aside, [and].....just taking over!" Complaints and concerns over the incident had reached the mayor's office.

To solve the problem, parents circulated a petition requesting that the principal have the goal posts removed. In response to this demand, the principal promptly communicated the nature of the incident to central office, expressing a concern in his description of the incident that it was important that "they hear it from me first, and not be caught off-guard." The principal then organized a meeting of all concerned parents to seek a solution the problem. In an attempt to facilitate the process, the principal invited representatives from the district office and the city's parks and recreation division. As reported by the principal, the meeting proved productive and parental concerns have since subsided. A plan to redesign the playground and basketball courts is currently being implemented.

It is important to note that the demand raised by parents and expressed in the petition effort was deemed significant enough by the principal to gain his attention and elicit a response, i.e., organize a meeting. When asked why this event captured his attention and provoked such a response, the principal noted, "Well,...if I would've chosen to do nothing, parents would've been

upset,.....It was a problem and I had to jump on it." It would appear that in his description of the event, the principal had concerns about the negative publicity created by the petition and its potential effects on his perceived effectiveness as principal with the community. He notes that complaints had reached the mayor's office. Not to have acted would have raised questions regarding his legitimacy as principal. Such sensitivity suggests a recognized dependence on the community for this legitimacy. Communicating the nature and status of the situation with the district office likewise expresses a concern for legitimacy with the central office. This too suggests dependence.

The fourth and final representative incident is one perceived by a principal as being both an opportunity and a problem with origins in the external environment of the school (E/P-O). The focus of the incident is a state supported educational program. In an attempt to encourage innovation at the local school level, the newly elected Governor proved successful at proposing a specific reform program and convincing the state's legislature to appropriate the funds needed to implement it. The official name given to the proposal was the "Centennial Schools Program" (CSP). As administered by the state department of education, CSP was touted by the Governor and media as the key to much needed change and progress in the state's public education system. To insure that the program would achieve desired effect, participation in CSP was made competitive. Only a fraction of the schools in the state would be chosen to participate. In an attempt to motivate schools to participate, significant discretionary funds above and beyond normal district and state allocations were promised to those schools chosen by the state. According to the Governor, only the most innovative and progressive school would be chosen as a "Centennial School."

To qualify for consideration, each school was responsible for submitting a strategic plan detailing a proposed innovation, i.e., what specifically was to be done and how. This plan was to

be the work of a site-based council at the school and, given the specifications laid out in the application itself, represented a substantial investment of time and energy by the principal, teachers, and parents. A special panel of educational professionals was appointed by the state department of education to review all proposals and select for participation those schools who had submitted the most promising plans. The cumulative effect of the program was the creation of an aura of prestige in the public's mind regarding those schools chosen to participate. Selling the program in this manner, it would appear that the Governor's intent was to provoke public sentiment in such a way so as to bring pressure on schools to change. Thus, most, if not all superintendents and school districts in the state encouraged principals and schools in their district to consider participation in the program.

The existence of this program is of concern in this particular incident in that an elementary principal found himself, along with the his teachers, weighing the costs of participating in the program. "Are the benefits that we might receive from the Centennial Schools Program worth the time and energy that will be required to achieve Centennial Status? That's the question we found ourselves asking," noted the principal. Also at issue for the principal were the possible negative reactions of the public and district office regarding a decision not to participate (i.e., submit a CSP application. Submission, however, does not guarantee acceptance into the program). Given the prestige building around the program, the principal appeared to be well aware of the publicity and opportunities made available through the awarding of Centennial School status. "There's a group of parents in my school that want to see that Centennial banner hanging on the front of our school,' he remarked. "They see it on other schools around town and it's something they want for their kids' school."

On the other hand, the principal also appeared to recognize that his school was already a leading performer, consistently producing some of the highest standardized test scores in the

district...."our school is quite good as it presently exists," he noted. "The money we receive may not be worth the time invested,....but if we choose not to participate this year, we'll have to defend our decision to certain parts of our community." In the end, the principal, in conjunction with the teachers in his school, decided not to apply for Centennial School status.

The importance of this incident lies in the rationale implicitly given for entertaining the thought of participating in the program in the first place. On the one hand, the program appeared to capture the principal's attention for the following reasons: 1) the prestige associated with being named a Centennial School; 2) the perceived importance of this prestige to certain parents in the school community, and 3) the monetary award accompanying the program. In this sense, the program represented enhanced legitimacy and support from various audiences. On the other hand, in weighing the decision to participate, the program became somewhat of a problem for the principal. He seemed to be well aware of the potential legitimacy costs involved, "We could have potentially had a real fight on our hands. As I said, there was a group of parents who really wanted for us to be a Centennial school, but we decided not to do it..... and I had to sell that to the community."

Conclusion

When considered in toto, the data in this study suggest that: 1) principals are dependent upon the environment for needed resources and legitimacy; 2) the flow of these resources and legitimacy from the environment is uncertain; it is inconsistent in intensity and over time; and 3) this uncertainty increases the vulnerability of principals to their environments. Thus, all environmental entities and events appear to be interpreted by these principals as supports and demands arising from an environment that principals see as representing dependence, uncertainty, and vulnerability.

Further, it would appear that the principals in this sample attend to those environmental stimuli which are perceived to be critical to their survival and success as principals. For many, personal survival and success are defined in terms of organizational maintenance and development. As expressed in the words of a middle school principal, organizational maintenance means "...letting the teachers do their work, ...keeping the central office out of your backyard, and keeping the ship running smoothly." For another, maintenance meant specifically "minimizing the negative publicity generated by an irate parent."

School improvement and development are likewise closely tied to definitions of principal success, thus providing a second guiding motive for the structuring of environmental attention. The statewide standardized testing program in Utah was cited on more than one occasion by many of the principals as a source of public vulnerability. The significance of the program lies in the fact that test results are published annually by the local media. Though somewhat frustrated by the testing policy and its imposition by the state legislature, the heightened publicity surrounding the program captured the attention of most if not all principals in the study. As a result, the improvement of standardized test scores was identified as an important component of school development efforts and a means of sustaining legitimacy with the larger environment.

Implicit in these observations and consistent with the ideas of Thompson (1967) are the notions of environmental buffering and bridging. Given that: 1) certain degrees of buffering and bridging are critical to organizational maintenance and development, and 2) the fact that principals in this study perceive personal survival and success as being closely tied to their ability to maintain and possibly improve their own school, it seems reasonable to find that principals structure their attention on those environmental elements that enhance or threaten this ability. Further, this study suggests that those elements in the environment that increase the public

vulnerability of the principal and subsequently that of the school are more likely to capture the attention of principals and evoke a response.

Two types of variation were noted between principals regarding the nature and focus of the environmental enactment process: 1) variations in the ability to strategically construct and map the environment and identify relevant elements therein, and 2) variations in the degree to which the principal's environmental focus was driven by personal or organizational concerns.

Principals seem to vary in their ability to "read," "conceptualize," "map," and "make sense of" the environment of their school. Likewise, principals vary in the level of sophistication with which they understand, filter, and articulate the cognitive processes associated with constructing and perceiving their environments.

As has been noted above, perceptions of personal survival and success were in many instances linked by principals to the maintenance and development of the school organization. Yet to identify this linkage is not to suggest a uniformity of congruence in perceptions across all 10 principals. As the data emerged, variations in the strength of this perceptual linkage became apparent. In the case of one particular principal, the close identification of personal success with organizational success proved less congruent. This principal seemed solely preoccupied with organizational maintenance as opposed to development and appeared to structure his attention on those elements of the environment which threatened this equilibrium. By focusing on possible environmental threats rather than on opportunities, this principal seemed to be in a reactive environmental response mode.

Though unable to articulate the distinctions between the technical and institutional aspects of the school environment, the principals provided examples of critical incidents which reflected a felt need to conform to the demands of each (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Given that conformity

brings legitimacy and the continual flow of resources to the school, these aspects of the environment prove helpful for making sense of the data which emerged in this study.

In terms of the technical environment, the perennial scarcity of resources in the system seem to make each principal aware of the need to procure resources of various kinds from the school's environment. The data suggest that monitoring and scanning the environment for potential resources is not an uncommon behavior for this group of principals. In addition, each principal articulated the perceived need and pressure to account for current expenditures. The difficulty of meeting this demand proved to be a source of frustration for many, however. Given the ambiguity and equivocality which surround the teaching/learning process, this frustration would appear to be understandable. The difficulties of clearly establishing such efficiency are never totally resolvable and would appear to be a perennial source of tension.

As has been argued elsewhere (Meyer & Rowan 1977; Meyer & Scott, 1992; DiMaggio & Powell, 1993), the public education sector in the U.S. exists in a in highly elaborated institutional environment. This institutional environment is comprised of a multitude of assumptions and beliefs regarding organizational work, practices, and procedures, and is rooted in widely accepted "norms of rationality" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Thompson, 1967). Although culturally accepted as a highly effective means of organizing, such strategies and structures are not particularly conducive to the work done in schools. Nevertheless, because of the level of acceptance surrounding such norms, conformity by an organization to these expectations results in increased legitimacy and a continual flow of resources for the school. Participation in the Utah Centennial Schools Program represents a useful example of how pressures from the institutional environment captured the attention of the principals in this study. With its site-based requirement and funding incentive, the program is widely perceived as a rational and legitimate alternative for improving education in the state. This perception remains in spite of the lack of empirical evidence to date supporting the relationship between decentralized governance structures and school effectiveness.

Nevertheless, principals seem to be highly cognizant of the fact that a certain status and legitimacy is gained through participation in the program and therefore proved eager to participate in it.

The data and themes which have emerged from this study should in no way be taken as conclusive. Further investigation and probing are indeed needed. To move towards a more explicit theory of environmental selection, a more representative sampling of principals is required. This sampling should consider the following dimensions: 1) principals across a variety of school levels; 2) principals across a variety of school and district settings, e.g., rural, urban, and suburban; 3) principals across a variety of school sizes; 4) principals in schools of varying SES, e.g., high vs low; 5) principals at varying stages of their career, e.g. neophytes vs veterans (Parkay, et al., 1992); and 6) principals of various ethnicity and gender. Nevertheless, as a preliminary study, this effort represents an attempt to move towards a theory of the environmental enactment and selection process of principals.

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STUDY TABLE AND FIGURES

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Principals Interviewed in Study (n = 10)

Name[1]	Age	Race	School Setting	Enrollment	School Level	Years Administrator
A-Kendall	Early 40s	White	Suburban	580	Elementary	3
B-Steve	Late 30s	White	Suburban	660	Elementary	4
C-James	Late 40s	White	Suburban	2010	High School	8
D-Melody	Mid 40s	White	Urban	680	Elementary	8
E-Abe	Early 50s	White	Suburban	850	Middle	8
F-Peter	Late 30s	White	Urban	600	Elementary	3
G-Beth	Mid 50s	White	Suburban	650	Elementary	2
H-Bill	Early 50s	White	Suburban	2,200	High School	9
I-Nancy	Mid 50s	White	Urban	590	Elementary	3
J-Dale	Mid 40s	White	Urban	1031	Middle	4

[1] Names used are pseudonyms.

Table 2: Sample Interview Questions

1. Imagine that your have a circular office with walls of glass setting on top of your school. Let's say that the environment is everything outside of your school building. Looking out over the environment, what is it that captures and/or demands your attention as principal?

2. Why do you pay attention to these entities?

3. Think of a critical incident that stands out in your mind as a principal over the last few years that involves prolonged interaction with an individual/group outside of your school?

   -Describe it
   -Who was involved?
   -Why was important?
   -Why was it critical?
   -What your primary concern during this incident?
   -Why?

4. Politically and as a leader, what entities, forces, personalities, etc. in the external environment of your school do you have to give attention to, to survive?

Table 3: Frequency Count: Environmental Entities/Events/Processes Identified and Discussed

	Principal										
Environmental Entity	A[1]	B[1]	C[3]	D[1]	E[2]	F[1]	G[1]	H[3]	I[1]	J[2]	TOTAL
school community											
parents	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10
-provoked/disgruntled parents	x	x	x		x	x		x		x	9
-"supportive" parents	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	9
PTA	x				x	x	x	x	x	x	7
school neighborhood	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10
-demographic conditions	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	9
-values	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	9
other schools				x	x	x	x	x			5
-feeder schools					x		x				2
other school districts				x			x		x		3
school governance community											
school district office	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	10
-superintendent				x	x		x			x	4
-local school board	x				x			x	x		4
city government	x	x		x	x		x	x			6
state department of education			x	x	x	x			x	x	6
state health & human services	x							x			2
state legislature			x	x	x					x	4
teachers' union	x		x	x				x		x	5
broader community											
community opinion leaders		x	x	x	x			x		x	6
-religious leaders		x			x			x			3
-banker			x								1
-service org., e.g., Kiwanis, etc.		x			x						2
police	x		x	x	x	x		x		x	7
gangs in community	x				x		x			x	4
local media			x	x	x	x		x		x	6
real estate brokers			x				x				2
local businesses		x	x		x	x		x	x	x	7

[1] = elementary principal
[2] = middle school/jr. high principal
[3] = secondary principal

Table 4: Critical Incident Profile

Principal	Number of Incidents (N=48)	Origin of Incident I/E[1]	Character of Incident P/O[2]	Specific Initiating Source of Incident/ Character of Incident[2]
A	7	4/3	5/2	1) parent/P; 2) parent/P; 3) teacher/P; 4) teachers/P 5) gang/P; 6) principal/O 7) principal/O
B	4	2/2	3/1	1) principal/O; 2) city council/P; 3) District/P; 4) teacher/P
C	2	1/1	1/1	1) teachers-students/P; 2) state legislature/O
D	6	3/3	4/2	1) teacher/P; 2) principal/P; 3) state-district/P; 4) SDE/P; 5) SDE/O & P; 6) principal-teacher/O
E	5	1/4	4/1	1) gang/P; 2) student/P; 3) state legislature/P; 4) businesses/P & O; 5) state legislature/O
F	6	4/2	4/2	1) PTA/P; 2) student/P; 3) parents/P; 4) another sch./P 5) state legislature/O; 6) principal/O
G	4	3/1	3/1	1) parent/P; 2) parent/P; 3) teacher/P; 4) PTA/O
H	5	2/3	3/2	1) student/P; 2) gang/P; 3) state legislature/O; 4) principal/O; 5) parent/P
I	3	2/1	2/1	1) parent/P; 2) teachers/P; 3) principal/O
J	6	3/3	4/2	1) students/P; 2) student/P; 3) district/P; 4) state/P; 5) principal/O; 6) state legislature/O

[1] I/E = i.e., of the incidents given, the number of incidents originating within (I) or outside (O) of school.
[2] P/O = i.e., of the incidents given, the number of incidents perceived by the principal to be a problem (P) or opportunity (O).

Figure 1: Classification of Critical Incidents, Perceived Source by Perceived Character

Perceived Initiating Source of Incident	*Principal's Perception of Incident*	
	P = Problem	O = Opportunity
I = internal to school	*15 I/P incidents* sources -teacher(s) -student -teachers/students	*8 I/O incidents* sources -principal -principal/teachers
E = external to school	*19 E/P incidents* sources -parent(s) -PTA -gang outside of school -students at another school -city council -district office -SDE -state legislature	*6 E/O incidents* sources -state legislature -SDE -local businesses -PTA

Table 5: Sample Critical Incidents - Internal Origin

Incident	Participants	Concerns Expressed by Principal	Principal's Rationale	Principal's Action	Result
I/O - creation of "Champions for Life" Program in School	-principal -local businesses -students	-principal looking for finances to support program -principal looking to generate good will in community -principal looking to generate good will in school -businesses looking for ways of displaying their corporate citizenship -(symbiotic, exchange relationship)	-provide a program to generate excitement in school -provide a program to encourage student achievement -provide a means of rewarding students -generating good will among local business for possible future support -generate community support	-contact businesses -initiate program -publicly acknowledge support of these business to community	-successful, positive program
I/P - student walkout	-teachers -students -principal -local media -community -district office	-uncontrolled negative publicity regarding the school from newspaper and television media -uncontrolled negative publicity regarding the principal -his legitimacy as principal with the public and with the district office	-"you don't want parents and everybody to think that things are out of control here [at the school].....that causes problems for both me and the school."	-attempt to persuade and reason with students -communicate with district office as to what was going on -communicate with parents and other environmental entities	-25 students boycott class -local press covers story in detail -principal lets "chips fall where they may."
I/O - purchase of new reading program	-principal -teachers -parents	-need for a new reading program -inadequate funds in district to purchase needed program	-"....if I can get parents on my side, they will support and purchase this needed program....if I effectively communicate what it is we are trying to accomplish and what we want to do, [parents] can be a hugh support."	-discuss need for program with parents -organize efforts to sell the idea and program to parents	-money donated by parents to purchase reading program -program implemented
I/O - invited visit of high ranking individual from district office	-principal -teachers in school -district office administrator: associate superintendent	-"I told the faculty that I was bringing him up to show off the school..." -"I think the district doesn't support the school as much as it should." -increasing the legitimacy of the school with the community and with district office -increasing the legitimacy of his own leadership as principal with community and central office -I need an opportunity to communicate to the district the positive things happening at this school	-inviting this high-ranking district official will provide me with an opportunity to: -generate positive publicity for school. -build morale in/around my school -communicate with the district office what is going on here at this school	-invite district administrator to school for a "controlled inspection"	-recognition from district office of school's progress -positive publicity -increased teacher morale
I/P -teacher complaints: K to 1st grade transition; Kindergarten philosophy	-teachers -principal -district office: elementary supervisor	-disgruntled teachers and consequences for principal's leadership -disruptive effects on learning environment	-potential consequences to principal's leadership	-call district elementary supervisor to advise -schedule meeting with teachers -invite district elementary supervisor to meeting to discuss Kindergarten philosophy	-continued monitoring/attention -continued communication with teachers -concerns met to date

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Table 6: Sample Critical Incidents - External Origin

Incident	Participants	Concerns Expressed by Principal	Principal's Rationale	Principal's Action	Result
F/P - use/abuse of school playground after school hours and subsequent parental petition.	-gang members -parents -police -principal -district office	-negative effects of petition drive. -principal's legitimacy with concerned parents -principal's legitimacy with central office -after hour, school play ground safety	-I must act and address this environmental disruption to address concerns and maintain my legitimacy as principal.	-communicate incident to central office -contact central office for advice -schedule meeting w/concerned parents -invite district representative to meeting	-redesign playground and basketball courts -parental concerns over issue subside
F/P - dealing with curriculum mandates from State Department of Education	-SDE -principal -district office	-state department designs and mandates curriculum that doesn't totally fit the needs of my school -"...the state office has power over us...[and yet] they don't know diddly...they are removed and out of touch." -district personnel feel strongly about complying with the state curriculum core, this puts some pressure one me. -I don't agree with certain aspects and philosophy of the curriculum being mandated by the SDE.	-"...for the curriculum mandates to work in my school I have to figure out how I can adapt them to meet the needs of my school. The district's desire to comply with state mandates means that I have to communicate to them that I am complying, even though I may not agree with ceratin aspects of the curriculum. Thus, I need to keep informed as to the specifics of these mandates and keep the district office happy."	-keep self informed as to latest SDE curriculum mandates and policy efforts -develop key relationships with SDE personnel to gain inside access -attempt to exert influence on curriculum policy at SDE -monitor politics surrounding district demands for compliance.	-adapt SDE curriculum mandates to needs of my school without provoking ire of district office.
F/P - Annual meeting of state legislature, legislative sessions	-state legislature -teachers -principal	-negative effect of Legislative decisions on teacher morale -disruptive effect of teacher morale on teachers' work	-"When the Legislature is in session...it (negatively) affects the morale of teachers..., the way they act with each other, the way they act with kids. This is something I have to give my attention to."	-talk w/ teachers, listen to their concerns -use humor to diffuse potential impact -stay on top of Legislative decisions affecting education -inform teachers of such decisions -encourage teachers to be positive, particularly with remarks made to students in class, who report remarks to parents, who complain to principal.	-minimization of effects on teachers and students. -occasional negative publicity for school. -increased feedback to school from parents.
F/P O - State Centennial Schools Program and the drive to achieve Centennial status	-Governor -state legislature -SDE -vocal parents -district office -principal -teachers -media	-large percentage of school community wants to participate in Centennial Schools program -legitimacy of school to community: program will generate positive publicity, funds, and provide opportunity to show off school, something valued by the community -school may not really need to participate, the effort invested may be greater than the returns received -legitimacy of leadership as principal: "choosing not to participate may create a public backlash."	-As principal, I think our school is quite good as it presently exists, the benefits received from the Centennial School program may not be worth the time required to achieve status. If we choose not to participate we must defend our decision to the community.	-talk to teachers and some parents, explain rationale for not participating in program. -decision made to not participate in program for this year	-decision not to participate received by community better than expected. -some negative feedback from parents
F/P - belated implementation of 990 classroom hour policy by district	-district office -principal -teachers -students -parents	-compliance to mandated policy, i.e., now that school is well underway for the academic year, how can I rearrange the school schedule to insure that we are in compliance with the 990 classroom hour policy ? -minimizing disruptive effects on school, i.e., now that school is well underway for the academic year, how can I rearrange the school schedule to minimize the disruptive effects to teachers and the school -Given mandate, how can I keep school constituents satisfied.	-this is a state and district mandate that I have to address, this will not go away unless addressed	-work formally with teachers to adjust school schedule -personally monitor school constituents and assess concerns -protect teachers, staff, students, and the learning taking place in the school.	-school is able to comply with the 990 policy with a minimal amount of disruption

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